

Grade 10

Lesson 4

Judging Government Responsibility



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A full list of contributors to *Bamboo Shoots: Chinese Canadian Legacies in BC* can be found at www.openschool.bc.ca/bambooshoots.

Images included in this lesson:

- Page 3: The Formal Apology from the BC Government to BC's Chinese Canadians, 2014 Province of British Columbia, Formal Apology to Chinese Canadians, Image 14194520435_4609bdc3d_o
- Page 6: Premier Christy Clark delivering the apology to BC's Chinese Canadians Province of British Columbia, Formal Apology to Chinese Canadians, Image 14007857328_31d70b63c2_o

Lesson Plan

Focus Question

Should current governments take responsibility for historical wrongs?

Big Ideas

- Chinese Canadians, along with other East and South Asian Canadians, faced a variety of different forms of discrimination and racism throughout BC's history.
- The treatment of Chinese Canadians mirrored the treatment of First Nations in BC, in terms of the segregation of their populations, and the removal of their rights as citizens.
- Governments can take responsibility for historical wrongs and offer redress in a variety of ways.
- There are a variety of opinions and perspectives on whether current governments should be required to apologize for historical wrongs committed by past governments.



Overview

In this lesson students will decide if the government should take responsibility for historical wrongs against Chinese Canadians. In making this ethical judgment, students will consider the historical context, contemporary standards, the responsibility to remember and respond, and the lasting legacy of historical wrongs. Students will also consider the various ways in which governments can take responsibility for historical wrongs. This activity will culminate in a U-shaped debate.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Make ethical judgments about the historical wrongs investigated in the first three lessons.
- Support their statements in debate with specific evidence.

Historical Thinking Competencies

- Making reasoned ethical judgments about controversial actions in the past and present after considering the context and standards of right and wrong (ethical judgment).

Lesson Preparation

Teacher Backgrounder

Read the Historical Backgrounders on the formal government apologies ahead of the lesson.

Tips

The debate activity in this lesson requires that students think about and prepare their arguments ahead of time. While there are some instructions for building arguments within this lesson, you may opt to devote a class ahead of this lesson to building strong arguments, using resources for teaching reasoned arguments.

Materials:

Blackline Masters and Rubrics are included at the end of this lesson plan. Other support materials, as well as an editable version of the lesson plan, can be found in the Grade 10 Teaching Materials on the website www.openschool.bc.ca/bambooshoots

- Historical Backgrounder: BC Apology to Chinese Canadians for Historical Wrongs – 2014
- Historical Backgrounder: Federal Government Apology for the Chinese Head Tax – 2006
- Blackline Master 1: Building Arguments (one per student)
- Blackline Master 2: Changing Arguments (one per student)
- Rubric 1: Assessing Arguments

Lesson Sequence

Part A: How to Respond?

(Suggested Time: 10-15 minutes)

1. Ask the students to pair up and take turns telling their partner about an event in their life that they consider to be unjust. It doesn't matter if the student was the perpetrator or the victim of the injustice. Did they give or receive an apology? If they didn't, what apology do they think should have been given? If they did, was the apology enough? Why or why not?
2. Together, the pairs brainstorm two to three ways to make amends other than an apology. As a class, share some of these ideas, and make a list of the possible ways to make amends.
3. So far, the students have been looking at major historical events in Chinese Canadian history, and examining the overt, systemic racism and discrimination. They'll have already expressed ethical judgments on the events of the past, whether on the Head Tax, Race Riots, the Exclusion Act, or any other event. Now they're invited to consider what an appropriate response is to a past injustice. To start, take a look at the Historical Backgrounders for two different formal apologies made by the Canadian and BC governments:
 - Federal Government Apology for the Chinese Head Tax – 2006
 - BC Government Apology to Chinese Canadians for Historical Wrongs – 2014



4. Have the students do a think-pair-share, answering the following questions:
“What is this apology for, specifically? Is this apology enough? Why, or why not?”

Part B: What Are Historical Wrongs?

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

1. Ask the students for which events from 1857–2014 in Chinese Canadian History they think the government of BC owes an apology. Invite them to play Time Shuffle again. Once they have constructed the timeline, they can identify the events that they think are worthy of a government apology.
2. In groups, and then as a class, the students brainstorm ways in which governments can respond to these historical wrongs. Help the students identify ideas such as:
 - official government apologies
 - financial compensation to victims and families
 - educational projects
 - memorials and commemorations
 - others?

Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of each method.

If You Have More Time

The consideration of historical wrongs could be broadened to events outside of Chinese Canadian history, to include other groups who immigrated to BC, as well as First Nations. It may be an opportunity to draw connections with other events the students have studied during Social Studies 10.

Part C: Prepare for the Debate

(Suggested Time: 20 minutes)

1. The students take one of three positions on the issue of government responsibility for the identified historical wrongs committed against Chinese Canadians.
 - The government has full responsibility and should pay financial compensation to victims and their families.
 - The government has some responsibility, and can make amends through education programs, or memorials and commemorations.
 - The government has no responsibility.
2. Let the students know that, to begin, they will be permitted to take any position that they agree with. In their U-debate, they will be encouraged to bring their views and arguments to the table, and then be open-minded to consider other viewpoints and move along the U if their viewpoints change.
3. Give a brief lesson on building reasoned arguments:
 - a. A reasoned argument considers facts and evidence, and makes connections that draw a conclusion.

For example:

Claim: My parents should buy me a car.

Facts and Evidence: My parents spend 10–12 hours per week driving me to and from school and practices. And, my parents say they are less stressed in the summer when they don't have to drive as much.

Conclusion: Buying me a car would save my parents stress, as they would cut down on their driving.

This argument checks off the boxes: facts and evidence, and a connection drawn to support the conclusion.

- b. A good counter-argument will not only find factual errors, it will consider other people's interests, look for questionable assumptions, and suggest more important or reasonable options.

For example:

Claim: You should get a bus pass.

Facts and Evidence: A reliable car costs thousands of dollars. A bus pass is just \$85 a month. Your parents just said they are having a hard time paying the bills they already have.

Conclusion: Buying you a car would add financial stress, which would not remove your parents' overall stress load—you should get a bus pass instead.

This counter-argument considers the parents' other interests, and suggests a more reasonable option.

- c. Invite the students to come up with one or two more examples of claims they support with facts and evidence, and connections that draw a conclusion. Then invite the students to make a counter-argument for each.
4. Using Blackline Master I: Building Arguments, students plan their reasoned arguments in support of their initial position on the U continuum. They may also anticipate counter-arguments, and what they might say in response.
5. Introduce the students to the criteria for a reasoned argument in Rubric I: Assessing Arguments. Remind the students (you may wish to write the reminder on a whiteboard or flipchart) that each argument and response to a previous argument should:
- Be respectful (not insulting) to the person who made the previous reasoned argument (no *ad hominem* attacks)
 - Be relevant (directly respond to the question of judging government's responsibility).

- Appeal to evidence (should relay facts, testimony, interview, or observation in support of the argument).
- Draw a logical conclusion from the facts and evidence.

Part D: The Debate

(Suggested Time: 30-45 minutes)

1. Have students arrange themselves in a U shape, with opposite views on the ends of the “U.” If they strongly agree or disagree, they sit at the tips of the U, and students who have more mixed opinions will sit between. If your students’ “U” is unbalanced, sit at the unrepresented end for the purposes of the discussion.

Each student offers their opinion in turn, explaining why their position is defensible. Alternate between the sides so the students’ arguments can build on each others’.

The students can (and should) shift seats if their opinion changes along the way, as they listen to others’ reasoned arguments. The aim of the debate is not for one side to “win,” but for each student to defend an initial position, then listen to others, while remaining open to changing their personal opinion.

2. Each student takes a turn arguing for their position and suggesting government action or inaction on the issue of historical wrongs. Ensure that the students are making a reasoned argument, and are not resorting to personal attacks or insensitive comments. This can be done through careful moderation and intervention to guide the debate.
3. While the students are listening to each other’s statements, they use the Blackline Master 2: Changing Arguments – Debate Conclusion to record arguments that are different than their own. This keeps them focused on listening, and helps them formulate new opinions if their views change along the way.

4. After hearing the various positions and arguments, invite further discussion, encouraging the students to change their minds when they hear reasons that cause them to question their current position. The students may wish to physically move to a new position that they now find more defensible for them personally.

When you feel the students have sufficiently explored their positions, and have had an opportunity to re-evaluate if they wished to do so, you can conclude the discussion. There is no need to reach consensus on the issue.

5. You may collect the students' Blackline Masters 1: Building Arguments and Blackline Master 2: Changing Arguments – Debate Conclusion. Assess the Blackline Masters using Rubric 1: Assessing Arguments.

Summary of Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to make a reasonable ethical judgment about historical wrongs against Chinese Canadians that:

- Are informed and evidence-based.
- Draw logical conclusions from the support.

The students submit their Building Arguments and Changing Arguments – Debate Conclusion work.

Assess their debate work using Rubric 1: Assessing Arguments.

Extension Activities

Responding to the Commentary

Share some of the support and criticism that the formal apology for historical wrongs against Chinese Canadians received through the media. (You can find some of this information by searching for editorials from the time the apology was formally announced.) Using the reasoned arguments they used in their discussions, the students write a short, persuasive response of two to three paragraphs. In these responses, they compare and contrast published viewpoints with their own conclusions about whether formal apologies are sincere and well-motivated, or whether another action is required to respond to injustices in our history.

Persuasive Essay:

The Adjustment Program was a response to a historical wrong.

Agree or disagree?

The students examine why the Diefenbaker government introduced the Chinese Adjustment Statement Program, which allowed Chinese people who had come to Canada under other names, in order to navigate restrictive immigration policy to return to their original names and identities. In a persuasive essay, the students attempt to convince their audience that the Adjustment Statement Program was, or was not, a sort of first formal apology, and a sufficient way to right a historical wrong.

You may refer to the Historical Backgrounder: Chinese Adjustment Statement Program – 1960.

Blackline Masters

Blackline Master 1

Building Arguments

Blackline Master 2

Changing Arguments – Debate Conclusion

Name: _____

The government has:



Anticipated arguments against your position: <i>Example: Some people might say my parents can't afford to buy me a car.</i>	Your counter-argument with supporting reasons: <i>Example: But with my own wheels, I can get to a part-time job, and help out!</i>

Changing Arguments – Debate Conclusion

Name: _____

Use the space below to record other arguments you hear that are different from your own:

Other Arguments: <i>Listen carefully to the arguments and identify the reasons offered in support of the argument.</i>	Supporting reasons: <i>What evidence are they giving, and what conclusions do they draw from that evidence?</i>

At the end of the debate, did your position change? Why or why not?

Assessment Rubrics

Rubric I

Assessing Arguments

Assessing Arguments

Criteria	Exceeding Expectations	Fully Meeting Expectations	Minimally Meeting Expectations	Not Yet Meeting Expectations
Justification for initial position	Student provides several plausible, insightful, and fully-formed reasons for selecting their initial place in the U-shaped discussion.	Student provides mostly plausible, insightful, and fully-formed reasons for selecting their initial place in the U-shaped discussion.	Student provides some plausible, insightful, and fully-formed reasons for selecting their initial place in the U-shaped discussion.	Student provides little to no plausible, insightful, and fully-formed reasons for selecting their initial place in the U-shaped discussion.
Articulation of additional points of view	Student effectively and concisely articulates, and provides clear justification for, alternative points of view represented in the discussion.	Student articulates, and provides justification for, alternative points of view represented in the discussion.	Student loosely articulates, and provides adequate justification for, alternative points of view represented in the discussion.	Very little or no justification is provided for alternative points of view represented in the discussion.

Criteria	Exceeding Expectations	Fully Meeting Expectations	Minimally Meeting Expectations	Not Yet Meeting Expectations
Rationale for changing/staying in position	Student provides several plausible reasons for maintaining or changing their position.	Student provides a number of mostly plausible reasons for maintaining or changing their position.	Student provides a few plausible reasons for maintaining or changing their position.	Student does not provide plausible reasons for maintaining or changing their position.
Offers persuasive justification for final position	All of the justifications for the final position are highly plausible and clearly justified.	Most of the justifications for the final position are highly plausible and clearly justified.	Some of the justifications for the final position are highly plausible and clearly justified.	Very few of the justifications for the final position are highly plausible and clearly justified.

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